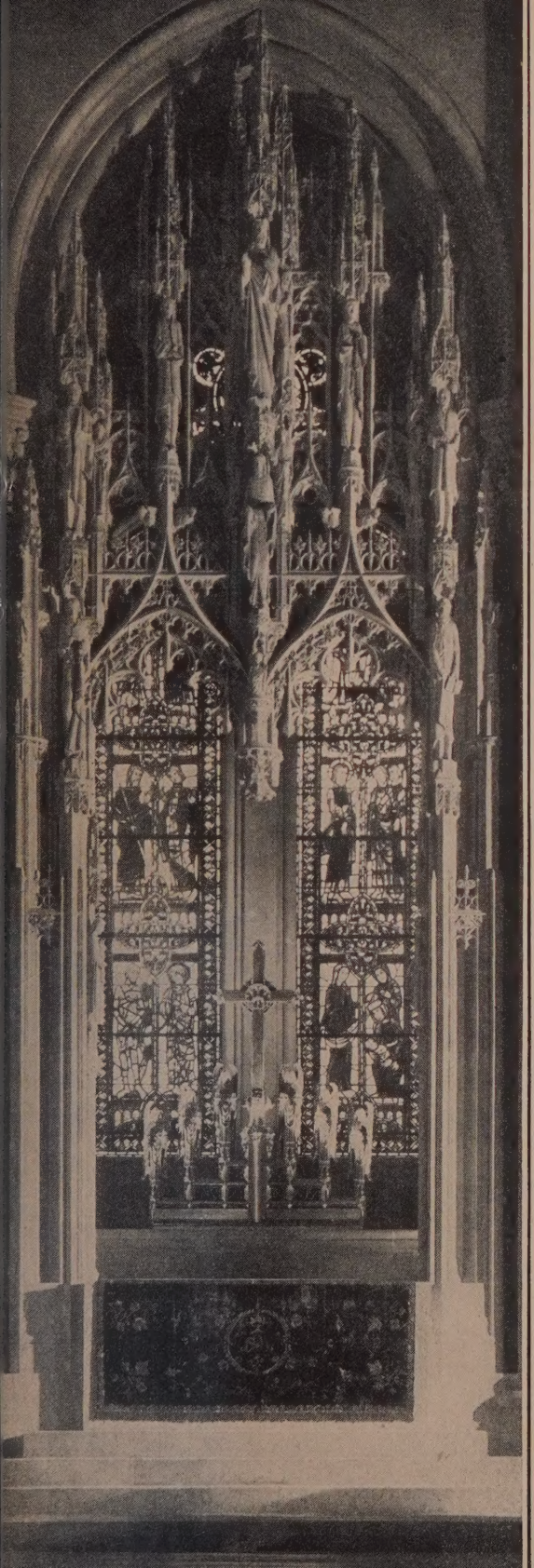

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On Escaping From This World

The Belfort of Bruges

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"THE LAST SUPPER," *by* Leonardo da Vinci

On Escaping From This World

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

A man who has not learned to escape from this world has missed one of the elemental lessons of life. As year follows year, is not your experience like mine: one of life's most imperious demands is somehow to succeed in escaping from this world? A man cannot stand this world, its externalism, its immediacy, its noise, unless he can get away from it. Moreover, as any one can see, this is what men everywhere are trying to do. A British officer in India, warned that he was drinking too heavily, lifted his glass and said, "My friend, this is the swiftest road out of India." Quite so! It is a familiar saying in England, easily translatable into American terms, that the quickest way out of Manchester is the ginshop.

If we ask the psychologists, they will tell us what devious and dangerous roads men use to escape the world: make-believe, fantasy, rationalization—evading reality, constructing wish-worlds, and so falling at last upon ineffective living or, it may be, insanity. Men are making a sorry business out of this deep, human need to escape the world.

So, of late, the whole idea of escape has fallen into the shadow. It is pathological, we are told; we ought not to want it. The world's realities are our conditioning environment. Face them, we are exhorted, and quit this desire to escape. So a man tries that but no man can keep that up long. If he is one kind of person, he turns to a monastery to escape the world; if he is another kind, he turns to drink or drugs; if he is another kind, he turns to music or nature. If he is a Goethe, wanting to create something beautiful, he says, "Without absolute solitude I am unable to produce anything at all." If he is a Wordsworth desiring for himself and his generation an enriched spiritual life, he says, "The world is too much with us."

You see, it is no adequate answer to the soul's imperious need of escape from the world to tell us it is wrong. Can it be wrong when it is so necessary? Can it be wrong when Jesus himself so needed it, sought it, was empowered by it? Listen to the Fourth Gospel: "Jesus . . . withdrew again into the mountain himself alone." So he escaped from the world. You say he returned to it again. Yes, with an impact such as no personality besides has ever had, but the strength of his blow upon the world was proportioned to the lift of it above the world. He withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

On the last day of the old year, as one thinks of the world we have left behind and of the world ahead, is there not a secret here which all of us need? Nietzsche said once, "If thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee." So some of us feel about this world. We live in it, are obsessed by it, look into it until it begins to look into us. Then we must get away. It is not a question whether we will try to escape; we must. The question is whether we know how to escape,

whether we have mastered the high art and indispensable spiritual technique of escaping from the world.

Hazlitt tells us that once Coleridge was to preach on a Sunday morning, as Coleridge sometimes did preach, in an English parish church. So Hazlitt walked ten miles in the mud across the countryside to hear him, and, in sentences that even yet are marked by awe, he tells us how, arriving late, he entered just before Coleridge stood in the pulpit and in a voice that filled the sanctuary announced his text: "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone."

Surely, an aspect of the Master's experience is there uncovered which at the beginning of another year we lack—and need. Is it unfair to our generation to say that it is marked by three characteristics — externalism, immediacy, and noise? By externalism I mean that we are pressed upon by things, that the whole foreground of our days is littered up by them. By immediacy I mean that our minds are set on tasks instantly to be done, planned today, finished tomorrow, so that life is a very rapid turnover, marked by urgency and speed. By noise no one needs to be told what is meant for nothing in this world today is so difficult to escape. Now, such characteristics cannot be kept on the outside of us; they dig in; they invade our culture. We are tempted to judge all of life externally in terms of size. We are tempted to trust in swift, slick schemes to get even beautiful things done, as witness the advertisements: learn to play the piano in thirty days; become a persuasive personality or a powerful public speaker by a correspondence course. As for noise, loud publicity does get the limelight, and even in music noise seems to some of us the one indisputable attribute of much we hear.

Such characteristics, dominant in a generation and pervading its culture, creep also into its religion. How they have crept into our American churches until all the religion some of us have left is what is called "practical Christianity"—that is to say, busy, energetic effort, outward tasks for immediate goals noisily worked for! My friends, that is not practical Christianity; it is too cheap and shallow to be practical. Something profound has been left out of it—he withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

To be sure, it is easy to guess what some one here is saying about this. The preacher, you say, actually dares to present religion as a means of retreating from life, but that is the perversion of religion. To run away from the crucial, social tasks of this generation and on some mountaintop of seclusion, trusting God instead, forget it all; to make mystical solitude a lotus land to flee to when life is too much for us—that makes religion a curse. That is why in Russia they had to drive God out of heaven in order to get something done on earth. So many think today.

To which I answer, My friend, you are so far right that religion, like any beautiful thing, like music or art or nature or home, can be used as a place of selfish retreat from the world, but that is its caricature. We are not going to give up any one of them because they can be abused. We will escape to music and come back with a fresh grip on life. We will retreat to nature and return refreshed and reempowered. We will fall back upon our homes and, if God grant, we will emerge again like Wendell Phillips, going

out to make a dangerous address, his wife saying to him as he left the door, "Wendell, don't shilly-shally." We need something more than mere busyness to get our work done well. We need backing; we need power; and the deep sources of our power are not in this world's externalism, immediacy, and noise, but far aloof from them.

As for Jesus, we may not describe him as making of mystical solitude a lotus land to flee to when life was too much for him. Did any one ever succeed in doing so much for this world with the time at his disposal? Apparently his father Joseph died when Jesus was a boy. Joseph is never heard of after Jesus was twelve years old. So Jesus had to support the family as the village carpenter until his younger brothers were old enough to take the burden up. He had no chance to get away for any public ministry until he was nearly thirty and then, after a year and a half or thereabouts, he was hanging on a cross. In the meantime he lived busily and urged activity: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven"; "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." That is not running away from life. But we never will understand why it amounted to so much in the end unless we know his deep secret: into the mountain himself alone.

Surely, if a man has any maturity of life and thought he must see that this comes close home to him. Out of years of intimate dealing with individuals in confessional conferences, no truth stands out more unmistakably than this: any man who tries to handle his life merely with the technique of energy, activity, and busyness, comes at last to the place where he cannot go on. When tragedy befalls and the heart is stunned or broken, one cannot handle *that* merely by being energetic. When youth passes and the first vital excess of energy runs down and life depends on discovering meanings that will not wear out with the passing years, one cannot handle *that* merely by being energetic. When temptations come and desire and duty are terribly arrayed against each other in the soul, one cannot handle *that* by mere busyness. Then the technique of restless activity fails us and we need the deeper, serener power which enabled Jesus to stay patient in Nazareth, to keep his head level when the crowd urged him, to keep his spirit sweet when the crowd hated him, to walk through Gethsemane to Calvary. Who cannot feel in that life its deep undertone: he withdrew again—and again—into the mountain himself alone?

Let us try to make this as pertinent to our practical help as possible by imagining some specific gains which Jesus won from this experience.

For one thing, like all the rest of us, Jesus was sometimes sickened by the world. We commonly say Jesus loved the world but we surely do not mean that the world looked to him like a beautiful landscape, so that he was charmed by it; that it sounded to him like a symphony and he was enchanted by it. On the contrary, read the gospels and see if the basic impression is not plain that Jesus was sickened by the world.

Was he merely loving the world when he denounced those who "devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers"? Was he merely loving the world when he said, "Ye are of your father the devil. . . . He is a liar, and the father thereof"? Was he

loving the world when he said to his disciples, "Neither cast your pearls before the swine"? No, this world made Jesus sick at heart as it does any good man. And especially when he had a spiritual message and the gross minds and furious passions of the mob utterly mistook his meaning and came to take him by force and make him king, he was sick at heart.

Only, you see, a man must not stay that way. For this is the paradox of saviorhood, that while a wise and good man will at times be sickened by the world, a wise and good man must not stay that way. For if a man is merely sickened by the world, then he cannot even know the world. No great thing ever can be known except by love. You would not thoroughly know a person if you did not love him. We cannot thoroughly know a great picture or a great symphony if we do not love it. Never let the physical scientists run away with and monopolize that great word "know." Some things cannot be known by measurement; they must be known by love. You would not know your child if you did not love him. You could not know Chartres Cathedral if you did not love it. Yes, take even a physical matter like the sea. Were its length and breadth and depth all known, its currents and its tides, the chemical composition of its water computed, not by that only would the sea be fully known. Something is missing from the charts and formulas that only a man like Masefield knows:

> "I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
> And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
> And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
> And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking."

True is it not—that in order to know one must love. And if that is true from a little child to the sea, it is true about the world. Consider, then, what happened to the Master on the mountain. He went up sickened by the world; he came down ready to die for it.

Is there anything that some of us need more? Ah, my soul! you do need a place alone and quiet where the sediment will settle, where disgust and bitterness will die in an altitude too high for them to live in, where, knowing all this world's evil, you will learn again to love the wayward multitude of blundering men and women, to love them until afresh you see them at their best, to love them until again you will take up your tasks on their behalf. In the end, it may be, if we learn well enough the uses of that mountaintop, men will remain unaware that sometimes they made us sick and will remember about us only that we were lovers of our fellow men.

Again, Jesus faced situations, as we do, where he could not do much more for the world until, first of all, he had done something for himself. At that point our typical American Christianity is often pitifully shallow. It constantly says to us, Get busy and give yourself to the help of men; expend yourself for the saving of the world. All of which, however well intentioned and often useful, commonly leaves out a major matter; namely, that it does small good to give oneself to men if one has only a feeble self to give. The first obligation of a man who wishes to be useful concerns himself. Of what good is it to expend oneself when one has no self to expend?

Now, whenever the Christian church leaves out an essential part of its message, some movement always rises to

emphasize it. That happened with Christian Science. Our churches had left out a vitally important truth, that it is possible in daily life so to demonstrate the available presence of the living God as incalculably to heighten the tone of one's health and happiness, and through that empty place in the church's message walked Christian Science.

So, of late, the churches have often forgotten the deep secrets of inward communion with God, from which come peace and power, guidance, and radical renovation of personal character, and the Oxford groups are capitalizing the deficiency. I am no more an Oxford-group man than I am a Christian Scientist, but I do understand why they help some people. Many in our churches have been urged, whether in the name of an energetic church program or a high-powered social campaign, busily to help save the world, when all the time they have known that their real problem was inside themselves, that they had no selves worth giving to the world, that they were split and disintegrated personalities, that they were harboring secret sins which they knew to be sins, so that their life was shadowed with hypocrisy, that not only charity but Christianity begins at home, with oneself inside, that much of this high-powered salesmanship about saving the world leaves the deepest needs of the human soul unfaced and unmet, and that some of us must find mountaintops alone and have something radically done within us before ever we shall do much for the world.

I wonder if it is an accident that after the mountaintop communion of the Master the Fourth Gospel says that, coming down, he walked upon the tempestuous waves of Galilee, and other gospels add that the winds grew calm. Many of you do not believe that such a thing really happened; no seastorm ever was stopped, you say, nor did any one walk upon the water. No more do I believe that it really happened, but because we cannot literally accept such miracle stories is no reason for regarding them as meaningless. Believe me, they never will tell that kind of story about us, that we came down from a mountaintop communion so radiant with power that we walked the stormy waves and stilled the winds. Not even if we had lived in first-century Palestine, where such miracles were easily credited, would they ever have told that about us. But they did tell it about Jesus. Something happened in him on that mountaintop so that when he came down he seemed to his disciples to walk the world's tempests and quell them. My soul, seek the sources of such power!

Finally, Jesus faced situations, as we do, where he had to escape from the world's low compulsions by deliberately putting himself under the highest compulsion. All of us, willy-nilly, live under one kind of compulsion or another. As the years pass something *gets* us. It may be one habit or another, this motive or that, a high purpose or a low one, but something gets us. Not even Jesus could escape that. We read that they were about to come and take him by force. That is a true picture of the way life treats all of us. Around every soul in this company compulsions rise; out of external environment or interior habit they come to take us by force; and the only way of escaping these low compulsions of the world, as the Master saw, is deliberately to put ourselves under high compulsion.

That is the essential meaning of prayer—deliberately to put ourselves

under the control and compulsion of the highest. Many people never get that idea of prayer. They think prayer means begging God to give them something they wish which he never would have given them if they had not asked, and so, having prayed for many things and not getting them, they decide that prayer is a failure and go about telling their friends that they now are liberated from that old superstition. Liberated? That is not liberation, that is inverted fundamentalism.

You see, there are two kinds of fundamentalism, direct and inverted. Here is a man who thinks that prayer means persuading God to change his mind and alter his will, and, so conceiving prayer, he goes on praying for everything he wants. That is direct fundamentalism. But here is another man, who also pictures prayer as an endeavor to persuade God to change his mind and alter his will, and, so conceiving prayer, he throws prayer scornfully away. That is fundamentalism too, inverted fundamentalism, based upon exactly the same ideas that all fundamentalists hold. I beg of you, do not be either kind. True prayer is not an endeavor to change God's will; it is an endeavor to release God's will into our lives. True prayer is not an endeavor to persuade God to do what we wish; it is an endeavor so to relate ourselves to God that he can do in and for and through us what he wishes. True prayer never says, "Thy will be changed"; it says tremendously, "Thy will be done."

If, now, some one says, This preacher is a modernist, I answer, Do you think the prayer the Master offered in Gethsemane was offered there for the first time? Is not that the way he always prayed on any mountaintop, himself alone? Listen to him, "Not what I will, but what thou wilt." Modernism? That is the way all great souls in their greatest moments have always prayed. Around them flowed the strong compulsions of this world and they escaped to the high compulsion and came back again, no longer to be compelled by the world but to compel it.

For this is the ultimate mystery of the mountaintop, that when one withdraws himself alone, behold, he is not alone.

PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, once more we have tried to talk about a great matter that never was meant to be talked about but only to be lived. Now send us out, beyond all our words, to live it. Amen.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on December 31, 1933.

▽ ▽ ▽

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal Spirit, high above us all yet deep within us all, we stand in reverence before Thee. Thou Who didst brood over chaos before the morning stars sang together, we, the children of a day, amid our passing years worship Thee. Thou art very great; we cannot by searching find Thee out. Yet grant us such insight and vision, such faith and wisdom, that before Thy greatness we may not be cast down, abashed, and confounded, but lifted up. Help us to feel ourselves at one with Thy creation and with Thee, our minds the offspring of Thy mind, our spirits the children of Thy Spirit, our purposes at their best the broken lights of Thine eternal purpose. Even in this vast world where our thoughts wander through eternity may we know that we are the sons of God and, if sons, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Eternal Spirit, as the great sea rises with its tides and flows not simply into large harbors but into every nook and cranny of the coast, so do Thou rise among this people and meet both our great and little needs.

We lift before Thee the dear and sacred interests of our families. We remember before Thee those whom we love, far sundered from us by the miles. May they be in our fellowship. We recall the names and faces of those we have loved long since and lost awhile, who have passed from the seen into the unseen. May they be in our fellowship. Grant such cleansing of our hearts, such penitence for all infidelity and ill temper, such renewal of our love that our households may be gathered up into a refreshed goodwill.

We lift before Thee the sacred interests of our nation. For all nobility of character and wisdom of leadership that have brought us thus far on our way to better times, we thank Thee. For all souls in high places or in obscure situations, who amid difficult days have kept their spirits true and have not broken faith, we thank Thee. For all that is lovely and courageous in our national life, blessed with honesty, fortitude, and fearlessness, we thank Thee. We beseech Thee for high hearts and wise minds that this nation may find its way to happier, juster days, and that all our commonwealth may stand fast in brotherhood.

We lift before Thee the large interests of humanity. We deeply repent of the prejudice that blows like a tempest across the world. For all stupidity that chooses war rather than peace, and ill will rather than good will we repent before Thee. For every echo of the world's evil tempers within our private lives we especially are penitent. May peace triumph and all that loves and makes war fail and the Prince of Peace see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Especially we commit to Thy keeping our deep and inward needs. What can we do for the world or for men if we ourselves are undone? Therefore forgive our sins and strengthen our weakness. Let Thy serenity fall upon

(*Continued on page 99*)

Through the courtesy of William Gorham Rice

THE CARILLON AT BRUGES, ON THE BANKS
OF THE MINNEWATER

The Belfort of Bruges

By Kamiel Lefévere

(This is the third article in the series on "Singing Towers")

Slowly now the cords upheave her!
From her earth-grave soars the Bell;
'Mid the airs of Heaven we leave her!
In the music-realm to dwell.
—Schiller

Bruges is often called the "Venice of the North" because of its many old and picturesque canals, loitering through the dream-city, cutting the crooked streets and level plains into a pattern of lace. It was known as early as the Third Century when H. Chrysole came to preach the Catholic religion. It was the 14th and 15th centuries, however, that brought to Bruges its full splendor and height of prosperity as the commercial center of the northern part of Europe under the rule of Philip de Goede, Duke of Burgundy. The whole community life, with its Trade Corporations and powerful Guilds, represented a most delightful picture, a combination of tapestry and lace in its colorful and delicate setting. The handiwork of its iron- and copper-smiths, its makers of artistic furniture and beautiful lace, were known and valued throughout the world.

The women, of an unusual beauty and intellect, dressed themselves with such perfect taste of pattern and color, a wealth of matchless harmony, that Johanna of Navarre, Queen of France, on entering the city, full of spite and jealousy, called out loudly: "I thought to be the only queen here, and I see hundreds of them."

Numerous masterpieces of untold artistic value, preserved within its walls, testify to the greatness and renown of the famous Flemish School of painters and artists. Van Eyck, Memling, Geerard, David Van der Goes are some of the most renowned painters who have brought glory and fame to the name of Bruges. It is also the only city in Belgium, with its convents and monasteries, which has closely retained its appearance of the Middle Ages.

The Belfort, Bruges' most renowned landmark, dominates the market square, from which it rises to a height of 220 feet, standing as the imperishable memorial of the independence of the Trade Corporations and Guilds of the city. A beautiful piece of Gothic architecture, it dates from 1248 and was the civic center for the burghers, its old bells calling the people to work, to warfare, to recreations and religious functions. A disastrous fire destroyed it for the first time on August 25, 1280. It was rebuilt and the year 1300 saw it completed. The carillon is located in that part which was built between 1483 and 1487.

Unfortunately, fires destroyed part of the building again in 1493 and in 1741. After the third fire, the "fleche" or pointed part of the tower was never completed again, and therefore the visitors are given a welcome opportunity to loiter on the flat part of the tower and enjoy the Breughel-like view of the whole city and surrounding fields.

Bruges, like all the other cities in

THE BELFORT OF BRUGES

This Building Includes the Carillon, Apartments for the Carillonneur, and Houses Some Municipal Departments.

Flanders, has a carillon in its Belfort, consisting of forty-seven bells. From old municipal archives we learn of the existence of three municipal bells as early as 1300 that were placed in the Belfry: the Bourdon, the Scelle, and the Bruud-Clocke.

The Bourdon, known as "Magna Campana," or municipal big bell, also called "Bell of the Precious Blood," was rung to call the people to arms, or to announce some victory, and for this reason had also the name of "Triomph Bell."

The "Scelle" (small bell), called "Scepens-Scelle" (alderman-bell), summoned the aldermen to the sessions and the courts of law.

The Bruud-Clocke (in old Flemish "Bread-Bell"), also called "Campana Nuptiarum," was rung to celebrate the nuptials of principal people and nobles of the city.

The octagonal part of the Belfry was built in 1483-1487. In 1528 eleven small bells were installed. Three more were added in 1536, with the first municipal record of having been played in "a musical way" by a priest.

In 1603, Robert du Blon, belonging to a family of bell-founders, was commissioned by the city to cast "a chord of bells to help and tune the new musical voorslach up the Halle."

A "voorslach" is the old Flemish name of playing a number of bells automatically. A large revolving drum is used on which harmonized music of any type and rhythm can be applied. Iron pins are placed in the already existing holes on the surface of the drum, which, in revolving motion, pulls levers which are connected with wires and hammers, thus striking the bells on the outside. This mechanism is controlled by clockwork, and the playing of this voorslach was to call the attention of the people to the striking of the time, which comes after the tune and which is done on the largest bell or Bourdon, and still is in existence on most of the carillons in Europe.

The number of bells that were cast by the bell-founder, Marc Le Serre, in 1603, and for which the above-mentioned bells served as sample notes, did not give musical satisfaction to the people as they were of a very poor musical quality.

The famous bell-founder, Pieter Hemony, while visiting his friend Jan du Blon, of the Bruges bell-founder-family, wrote a letter to the magistrates on January 25, 1673, proposing to cast a new carillon for Bruges, giving price and details for 35 bells. This was accepted by the city on one condition, that he would come to Bruges to cast the bells on the place itself, which offer was declined by Hemony for certain personal reasons.

Negotiations were made in 1741, by the city authorities and the well-known bell-founder, George Dumery, of Antwerp, for the purpose of recasting all the bells and renewing the mechanism, so that ". . . the whole set of bells should be as perfect as possible and that each single bell should render an equally true and melodious note."

This work was completed and approved in 1743, which is the actual date of the present carillon. The bells have a mellow and velvet-like tone. The total weight is 56,166 pounds.

The carillonneur of Bruges is the well-known Antoon Nauwelaerts, who belongs to a family of carillonneurs. His grandfather held that position at Lier from 1858 till 1876, to be followed by his father from 1876 till

(*Continued on page 99*)

Why Not Utilize the Usable?

By Grace H. Patton

Do you know of any feeling much more funereal than that which one encounters when one enters, some time during the week, the average church building? With the possible exception of the auditorium—which may be in partial use as a place of prayer and meditation—all the rooms are dark and silent. There is no sign of activity anywhere. Windows are closed. Curtains are drawn. Almost one imagines a stale, indescribable odor that was not noticeable on Sunday. The great empty edifice seems filled with the ghosts of departed doings; and it is almost incredible that this is the same domain which, but a few days ago, was so vibrant with life. This sense of oppression is increased as one visits those parts of the building where, on Sunday, activity was so very pronounced—the classrooms usually occupied by little children. On Sunday the rooms resounded with the shrill soprano of aspiring little voices attempting the Church School songs. The piano could be heard far beyond its legitimate territory. There was the frequent dropping of toys, the scrambling for work materials, the sudden howl of some undisciplined darling, the patient, persuasive voices of teachers, and the constant to and fro of restless little bodies.

Now there are no voices of any kind. The piano is closed. Children's chairs stand in stiff, serried rows like stones in a juvenile graveyard. No stalwart young legs are dangling from the seats; no recalcitrant heels are kicking the varnish off the rungs. Everything is silent. Over in a dusky corner one comes upon the dismantled sand-table with its remnants of last Sunday's palm-trees half buried in what now, more realistically than ever, bears the aspect of the Arabian Desert. Poking about in the supply closet one finds a conglomerate mixture of scattered toys, left-over lesson leaflets, unfinished gobs of pulpy plasticene, and the beginnings of a nomad tent. But all lie quiet and unused now, awaiting, like Eugene Field's famous "Little Boy Blue," "the touch of a little hand" to bring them back to life again. And we know that this resurrection will take place with a vengeance when the ensuing Sunday brings its inrush of little folks all eager to appropriate things to themselves. But, in the meantime, all activities are in abeyance, all equipment is on sabbatical leave, classrooms are vacant, and a pall of dismal desuetude hangs over everything.

Now Riverside Church, with its characteristic eagerness to devote all of its building and equipment to human use, thinks that such a situation is just too bad. The church is thrifty to the point of not wanting *anything* wasted that can in any way be used in serving people, be they large or small. "Classrooms," say they, "are meant to be occupied. Equipment is made to be used. And why should this use be restricted to one day out of seven?" So when, a couple of years back, a group of progressive parents living in the community came to the church asking that the rooms used for the nursery

children on Sunday might be devoted to children of the same age on weekdays, the church authorities said, *en effet*, "Go to it, parents. And more power to you!"

So now, if one approaches the precincts of the Church School on weekdays at about nine-thirty in the morning, one does not find that deadly calm which overtakes so many Church Schools with the setting of the Sabbath Day sun. One sees a group of little toddlers trudging with determined seriousness through the great entrance hall, riding wide-eyed up in the elevators, taking heroic leave of mothers or nurses who have accompanied them, depositing diminutive wraps in self-service cubicles, and settling down to the business of the morning. This business becomes—as one watching it soon discovers — the normal activities of children of nursery age (from two to four-and-a-half) and the carefully planned program of a progressive Nursery School minus the frills of special fads, or any of the excrescences of research and experimentation which often attach themselves to many modern schools of this type. For the parents specially stipulated, when this project was first promulgated, that, in this special situation, they did not want their children subjected to anything complicated or unduly "advanced."

The school is divided into two groups, the older and the younger children, meeting in different rooms. The program is very simple and flexible. A trained worker is in charge and she has her assistants, some paid, others working for practice or pleasure. The mothers themselves like, when it is feasible, to work with the group. And they have the privilege, when the morning program is ended, of conferring with the teachers on matters relating to their own children.

THE HIGH BALUSTRADE MAKES THIS ROOF SPACE ON TOP OF THE CLOISTER A SAFE AND AVAILABLE OUTDOOR PLAYGROUND THE YEAR ROUND

The morning schedule, which lasts until twelve o'clock, includes play, rest, lunch, simple activities and outdoor recreation. When one looks about for the locality of the last-mentioned pursuit, one is guided by the sound of childish voices to a high-walled roof right over the cloister entrance to the church. Few, even among the church members, are aware of the existence of this sheltered spot where, in good weather, the children may play in perfect safety, knowing they cannot possibly come to grief, and may yell to their hearts' content, for they cannot disturb anyone. Directed play makes up a large part of the children's daily program, and whatever instruction is given is very marginal and informal. The school's main objectives for the children are the acquirement of good health habits, the ability to play happily with others, and the gradual achievement of social adjustment.

This little school is entirely a community affair, conducted by a parent committee in co-operation with an interested group in the church. The enterprise is sponsored by the church, but the church does not carry it as one of its activities and is not responsible for its program. The parents who send their children to this school are, for the most part, men and women themselves possessed of superior educational advantages, for the neighborhood of Riverside Church, as everyone knows, is one of the greatest cultural and educational centers in the world. These parents—largely professors' families or those having some connection with the adjacent schools and colleges—coveted for their children the advantages of a qualified Nursery School where the price would not be prohibitive. So, in 1932, they asked the church for the use

SUNLIGHT AND SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AT PLAY ON THE CLOISTER ROOF

of their rooms, organized their committees, arranged the financial end of the project, engaged their teachers, and got to work. The result is a beautifully equipped, well-conducted Nursery School where mothers may deposit their little folks during the busy hours of the morning, and where the children themselves may have the benefit of trained care and supervision.

"And how about the finances?" will be the first question of any of you who may be wondering if the rooms of your Church School might be utilized in similar fashion. The parents take care of that. There is a moderate tuition which covers workers' salaries and expenses. An overhead charge for light, heat, elevator service, and such items

comes out of this for the church, and the treasurer of the church takes care of the money transactions. There is no profit for anybody. If, by chance, any extra money is on hand at any time, it goes into the purchasing of additional equipment that becomes the permanent possession of both Sunday and week-day groups.

If, then, this little story has, perchance, roused any of you to wonder if there is any such possibility ahead for your own Church School rooms, please do not dampen your ardor at the very start by saying, "Oh, well, a church like Riverside has such wonderful equipment. It can do anything. But look at us! We can't." Now we assure you that just is not so. We all know that little children are contented with very simple things. They do not demand much. You have the equipment that is used in your nursery, or beginners' department, on Sunday. Very little else is needed.

So, if this simple tale of very modest achievement has interested you, make another sojourn into your deserted classrooms during the week, contrast that condition with what it might be, consider the very great importance which modern educators attach to the early nursery years, put yourself into a mood of enthusiasm and venturesomeness, confer with a few others in your community who might be open to suggestions along this line—then, in all seriousness, ask yourselves, "Why should perfectly good classroom space and dearly bought Church School equipment be doomed, for the greater part of the week, to darkness and disuse? Why not utilize what is so obviously usable?"

The Latchstring

Carillon Marks King Albert's Passing. A musician can speak through his instrument at a time and upon a theme that would leave him dumb indeed if he were held to the limitation of mere words. So it happened in the carillon tower of The Riverside Church on Sunday afternoon, February 18th. Our carillonneur, Mr. Kamiel Lefévere, a native of Belgium, who has spent the greater part of his life in the bell towers of the cities of the Belgian countryside, was in the midst of his regular recital. Playing for the community here on Morningside Heights, and looking out of the window from the cabin where the clavier is housed, high up in the top of the tower, he saw the Hudson reaching toward the Bay, while his mind's eye traveled down the harbor and out to sea, and saw his own beloved Belgium where his king, Albert, lay dead. Under his touch on the clavier keyboard, the notes of the last number of his regular program died away. There was a long pause and then there came out from the tower sonorous and majestic music—Chopin's Funeral March. Kamiel Lefévere was, for all intents and purposes, in Belgium; the carillon was a Belgian carillon; a Belgian citizen was paying his high respects to his dead king.

▽

Christmas in Salonica. From the American Farm School at Salonica, Greece, Mrs. Charles L. House has written about their Christmas:

"We have had such a lovely Christ-

mas with Father and Mother House well and full of their usual spirit. Christmas Eve we let the boys sit up late and we all listened to the world 'hook-up' of carols and chimes from The Riverside Church and most of the countries of Europe. We had a roaring fire in the Community room and with the holly which Mr. Litsas, Christo and Demeter brought down in the snow from Hortiach, the music, and Father's reading the Christmas story, it was all very lovely. A group of the boys sang carols under our windows at five in the morning on Christmas Day, and later, about noon, they came around again, as is the time-honored custom, with the collection box and sang and received money for the prisoners held behind the walls of the old citadel of Salonica. They passed out slips of paper after their songs with the words, 'I was in prison and ye came unto me.' They raised 900 drachmas (about $10.00) and Mr. Litsas is going to arrange to have a group of the boys buy food and take it themselves to the prisoners. Here, the prisoners must feed themselves and if they have no friends outside they fare pretty badly."

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Lexington 2-0900. It is our guess that more people in the Riverside congregation have memorized this telephone number than is true of any other number in the directory. We do not except the telephone number of the church itself in this connection. We suspect that this telephone number has been "connected" with more anticipation, satisfaction, and heart-throbs than is true of any other type of conversation that has passed through our switchboard. In the homes and lives of a multitude of people in New York City Lexington 2-0900 has meant the difference between despair and hope, a bare table and something to eat, cold and warmth, unemployment and work. In support of this seemingly extravagant statement, let us quote verbatim a paragraph from a report made by Miss May Preuss at an Employment Council dinner:

"We interview between six hundred and a thousand applicants every month including old and new registrations. During the three years of the employment service we have registered approximately 5,500 applicants. We have filled over four thousand jobs. Of these four thousand jobs, over fifty per cent have come directly or indirectly through The Riverside Church. In other words, The Riverside Church has been instrumental in helping find over two thousand jobs. During the three-year period the applicants have earned over $250,000."

So it has come about that Lexington 2-0900 has taken its place among the symbols of The Riverside Church. It is a symbol of relief. Give it meaning!

▽

Keep the Church Calendar Straight. We are approaching the end of the fiscal year in The Riverside Church. That means budget. We must think and talk about the budget of the current year and the prospects of making good before the date of expiration on April 30th. That is what we mean by the current year, namely, the year which began on May 1, 1933 and will end April 30, 1934.

When we talk about the new budget, or the next year's budget, or the year ahead, we are talking about the year which will begin May 1, 1934 and end April 30, 1935.

We are anxious to avoid confusion at this point. Now if you have paid your pledge for the current year or made a definite pledge for the current year which you intend to pay or expect to pay before April 30th, you need not be concerned about anything you hear from us that applies to this year unless you are in a position to help meet a possible deficit in either the current expense or benevolence budget.

The church office is dealing with both years. They are trying to finish up the current year on April 30th without a deficit in either the current expense or benevolence items. At the same time they are canvassing the program of the church and its various organizations with reference to the next year, namely, from May 1, 1934 to April 30, 1935. Our members and supporters will help themselves and the general situation greatly by keeping these dates in mind.

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Trinity Life. This is the name of a new publication which has come to our hand from Trinity Church, Boston. We received with it a gracious letter from Dr. William E. Gardner, associate of Dr. Arthur Lee Kinsolving, minister of Trinity Church, very generously, though unnecessarily, giving THE CHURCH MONTHLY credit for having influenced their church in its decision to carry forward a regular publication. In this instance they bring the paper out three times a year instead of depending upon the so-called "year book," which for the most part has been the one medium through which the churches have attempted to present their statistics and the explanation of their program to their constituencies.

We are happy to welcome *Trinity Life* to our list of exchanges and look forward with interest to its appearance from time to time. We hereby warn its editor and contributors that we are already setting ourselves to poach upon the material which we are sure we are going to find there. Trinity Church has belonged to the entire world since the days when Phillips Brooks, through his gracious personality and compelling preaching, brought Christ alive to the people of his generation.

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PRAYER

(*Continued from page 89*)

our anxious hearts and may unrest be calmed within us, temptations that have long besieged us be overcome, our souls rise transcendent above this world, superior to it, to win a victory in the face of it, that we may be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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THE BELFORT OF BRUGES

(*Continued from page 93*)

1907. Antoon Nauwelaerts followed up his father until in 1913 he became carillonneur at Bruges after a very successful competition.

His son, Louis, is already keeping up the tradition of the family as assistant carillonneur with very promising qualities.

Thus the vision of this dream-city is enhanced by the harmony of the bells that ring out, jubilant or mournful, in complete harmony with the old setting, atmosphere, and artistic and architectural treasures, bringing back the memory of past glory and pride.

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LOST AND FOUND

The pastoral responsibility in The Riverside Church is one which is shared by a large number of people. The ministers are constantly concerned lest there be cases of sickness or distress which are not brought to their attention and about which they do nothing at all for the simple reason that they are ignorant of the facts. The members of the staff and responsible heads of the various organizations in the church share this attitude with the ministers, for in attitude and disposition they, too, are ministers in very fact. Instances of this sort that are lost in the general work of the church are often found in the midst of the activities and interests which characterize the various organizations. We are anxious that no individual member of the church shall be lost in the midst of the very large numbers with which we are dealing here. It is always highly gratifying to find that someone who has come into our fellowship from a distant city and another church and has, as it were, walked out into the rather large army of people who make up our congregation and become lost for the time being, is found again in one of our fellowship groups, living a normal and happy church life and often serving effectively as a responsible officer and worker in some program.

If anyone in our fellowship feels that in any sense he has become lost in the midst of numbers since joining The Riverside Church, we are confident that if he knocks at the door of one or another of the groups that are actually doing the work of the church, he will be readily found again.

We are counting on each individual to share the pastoral responsibility at this point.

BOOK AND PAMPHLET SERVICE

OF

The Church Monthly

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